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we've got the beat

You used to do it in front of a mirror with your bedroom door closed. You'd pump up the music and watch your reflection as you lip-synched along to the lyrics. You were hot – you were going to be famous. Trouble was, you couldn't carry a tune, and so the most exposure you ever got was when your brother's friends overheard you as they walked past your room. So we asked three new, and very different, girl groups what makes them think they can make it as musos.

Australia's three new all-girl bands reckon they have what it takes to make it big as musos. So Rachelle Unreich decided to suss out their acts to see if they actually do rate as real talents.



FROM LEFT:
Melanie Alexander,
Lorinda Noble, Robyn
Loau, Siobhann
Heidenreich, and
Jackie Cowell.

GIRLFRIEND

When I first spot them in the lobby of their record company, before they realise I'm about to interview them, I eavesdrop on the members of Girlfriend – Robyn Loau, Melanie Alexander, Jackie Cowell, Siobhann Heidenreich and Lorinda Noble. Their chatter varies between discussing models, to guys they'd like to meet (I didn't catch any

names), to what everyone is wearing (mainly jeans and little tops).

The group, aged between 16 and 19, was formed after Melanie, Jackie and Siobhann's dance teacher introduced them to a songwriter. Robyn and Lorinda joined afterwards. But the girls insist they're not merely another put-together group of pop princesses.

"A lot of people think of us as pushovers and airheads, but we're tough girls," says Robyn. "We've had to

fight to get here."

While management is a big factor in the group's success – their 'people' are sending them to Japanese classes to help them conquer the Asian charts – the girls have actually been singing since they were young. And Siobhann is almost eligible as a concert pianist.

"A lot of girl groups use their sexuality to sell themselves, but we don't," says Robyn. "The youth of today need role models, not someone who sticks their bum and tits out. Teenagers need to look at someone famous and think, 'It's OK to be myself'."



CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM:
Jill Adams, Rachel Parkinson,
Elisabeth Warning, Natasha Hart,
Susie Purcell, and Karen Turner.

EXPLODING DAISIES

There are six of them, they're all around 17 and 18 years old, and they seem very herbal. They wear flowing hippie dresses with cute black boots. When they tell me they each have a crystal, I'm not surprised.

Of the three girl groups, Exploding Daisies – Karen Turner, Jill Adams, Susie Purcell, Natasha Hart, Rachel Parkinson and Elisabeth Warning – are the rawest talents and the least commercial, and they're the only ones who play instruments as well as sing.

Whether they're jamming about how hard it is for women who have to pay the rent and look after babies (*Young In Love*) or boys with bad habits (*Mary Jane Guy*), their music carries a message.

The girls met each other in primary

school and later started playing in someone's garage. Now they do pub gigs in the hope that they'll be discovered.

Exploding Daisies have some help in their quest for fame and fortune from the Australian Women's Contemporary Music Inc (supported by the NSW Minister for the Arts). It gives the girls industry advice without demanding compromises. "We decided we wouldn't record something if it wasn't written by a member of the band," says Elisabeth.

And, though they're mentioned in the same breath as other new girl groups, these girls are quick to point out: "We just don't have the sex image." Karen, who went to school with fellow diva Melissa Tkautz, says, "I wish her every success." But Elisabeth isn't as generous: "All she's got is big tits."

So what are Exploding Daisies all about? "Our philosophy is, hold onto your individuality," says Jill. Elisabeth puts it differently: "You're going to die, so there's no use trying to impress anybody, because they're going to die too."

"We just don't have the sex image"

FROM LEFT: Roxanne Clarke, Kellie Hoggart and Liza Witt.



TEEN QUEENS

Teen Queens have a great deal of talent in certain areas. Pouting, for instance. Liza Witt, 19, Roxanne Clarke, 18, and Kellie Hoggart, 18, are damn good pouters.

Those are their real names, but when they're in Teen Queens mode, the girls use the stage names of Katherine McGregor, Wendy Wilson and Tammy Wells. Their record company chose the girls from 200 people – mostly actors and models – and gave each of the girls

a new identity. This is apparently so that we (the fans) don't confuse the real girls (themselves ex-models and actors) with the characters they play on their TV show (still untitled at the time of printing).

It's hard to tell if the girls can really sing – their song *Be My Baby* (originally a 50s tune) relies more on synthesizers than on human voices. But the girls don't pretend to be brilliant artists – or so I think, till Liza tells me she's "a very deep thinker" and Roxanne adds that *Be My Baby* has "a lot of meaning". Oh yeah? What's so profound about, "Be my, be my baby, be my baby now"?

It's hard to know if the girls are being moulded by the guys who discovered them. These same guys sit in on the interview and interrupt whenever I ask anything controversial. When I ask the girls if they're prepared for people who don't take them seriously, one of their minders says, "What's serious? I don't think Bruce Springsteen has any more credibility than Melissa Tkautz."

But I do manage to pick up a few things from the girls before I leave: "It's really amazing what make-up can do" (Kellie); "A man with an attitude is the best" (Roxanne); and "Follow your dreams, because they'll come true" (Liza). Liza forgot to add that it helps if you look good in a bikini.

"It's really amazing what make-up can do"